



## Parliamentary Strengthening Program II

### What is the Parliamentary Strengthening Program II?

The Parliamentary Strengthening Program's main objective is to improve the Kenya's Parliament's effectiveness in producing legislation, acting as an oversight institution, and carrying out its representation functions in a more democratic, transparent, and effective manner.



*The Parliament of Kenya*

### Project Duration and Budget

April 2010-March 2014  
\$9.85 million

### Who implements the Parliamentary Strengthening Program II?

The State University of New York  
[www.suny.edu](http://www.suny.edu)

### Where does the Parliamentary Strengthening Program II work?

Nationwide

### What does the Parliamentary Strengthening Program II do?

The program's approach is to provide technical assistance and legislative/legal and policy analysis while strengthening

the Kenya's Parliament's institutional capacity through collaborative planning, implementation and support for the parliamentary service departments.

Activities fall into six main streams: support to committees; support to the Parliamentary Service Committee and Departments; support to the Office of the Speaker; support to selected caucuses such as the Kenya Women Parliamentary Caucus, the Inter-Party Reform Caucus the Caucus on the Fight Against Corruption, and the Constituency Development Fund Caucus; support for parliamentary engagement with civil society organizations through a small grants program; and support for Parliament's representational function and oversight of service delivery.

### How is the Parliamentary Strengthening Program II making a difference?

Approximately 800 legislators and members of their staff have participated in trainings and educational events. The outcomes of these trainings are impressive: standing orders now guide how the Parliament operates in compliance with the new constitution, including processes that make the body more accountable and effective; committees have annual work plans and tracking tools to assist them with workflow; and, the Speaker's Office, oversight committees, the Kenya Women Parliamentary Association, and Caucus on the Fight Against Corruption have reform agendas.

In 2011 Parliament passed 31 bills, reflecting a laudable increase over the ten bills passed in 2010.

Enhanced collaboration and consultation between Committees and civil society is evident--increasingly, committees are calling expert witnesses, collaborating with community based organizations to develop legislation or oversight tools, and conducting visits and hearings outside of Nairobi. Detailed committee schedules are now posted on Parliament's website with an indication of which meetings the public may attend.

The Legal Counsel's Office developed professional and ethical standards for the conduct of Parliamentary Counsels, and organized a major regional conference where Legal Counsels from 13 African countries signed the Nairobi Principles, which Kenya's Parliament has since adopted. To enhance transparency and accountability, an

Electronic Voting System has been installed in Parliament that will help track and record members' votes.

### **What key challenges does Parliamentary Strengthening Program II face?**

The 2010 Constitution calls for a host of Parliamentary reforms, requiring the legislative body to adjust its structures, procedures, and lawmaking activities. Passing the constitutionally mandated transitional legislation meant that Parliament had to quickly deliberate 23 complex and urgent bills to realign Kenya's legal and governance landscape (in addition to other legislation). The Constitutional transition also required significant preparations for the anticipated bi-cameral parliament. Both houses of parliament will require new rules, staff, procedures and facilities. Supporting these major changes has been a major focus of the program's work.

### **Parliamentary Strengthening Program II in action**

#### ***Improving Implementation of the National Budget***

"The Budget Office was created five years ago. We received support from USAID to create the legal framework and establish the Fiscal Management Act of 2009. We continue to receive support from USAID for analysis and publication of budget options. The budget never used to be amended, just rubber-stamped. This (2011) was the first year we did budget consultations with the public. Based on what we heard from advocacy groups, we were able to amend the budget to increase funding for the recruitment of teachers." Phyllis Ndunge Makau, Director of the Parliamentary Budget Office.

#### ***Supporting Women Parliamentarians***

"The training we received from USAID was very empowering in terms of building our capacity to implement the new constitution. As a member of the Kenya Women Parliamentary Association, I appreciate the technical support I receive to look at things through a gender lens, to meet with stakeholders and to work better with our male counterparts." Hon. Cecily Mutitu Mbarire, Member of Parliament, Runyenjes Constituency, Eastern Province.

#### ***Implementing Constitutional Reforms***

"Since I came to Parliament four years ago, USAID, through the State University of New York, has provided training that is near or equal to what we receive from the Government of Kenya as a Parliament. They have provided the resources we required particularly in the implementation of the constitution." Hon. Mohammed Affey, Member of Parliament, Chairman of the Committee on Equal Opportunity.

### **For more information**

[http://www.cid.suny.edu/our\\_work/current\\_projects/our\\_work\\_projects\\_Kenya.cfm](http://www.cid.suny.edu/our_work/current_projects/our_work_projects_Kenya.cfm)

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